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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 3 December 1990, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. SARDENBERG (Vice-President)	(Brazil)
later:	Mr. de MARCO (President)	(Malta)

- Tribute to Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, President of the General Assembly at its eighth session

- Question of Palestine [23] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

  (c) Draft resolutions

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS EIGHTH SESSION

The PRESIDENT: I have to draw the attention of members to the sad news of the death of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who was President of the General Assembly at its eighth session, in 1953.

On behalf of the General Assembly I should like to convey to the members of Mrs. Pandit's family and to the Government and people of India our deepest and most heartfelt condolences.

Mrs. Pandit's association with the United Nations went back to its creation. She led the unofficial Indian delegation to the San Francisco Conference in 1945, and in 1953 she was elected President of the United Nations General Assembly, the first woman to hold that office.

She was a woman of high ideals, and she was prepared to suffer for them. Long years in prison served only to increase her determination to achieve the independence of her country, India, which she later served with such great distinction in the international field.

I invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of Mrs. Pandit.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of India.

Mr. VAJPAYEE (India): Mr. President, my delegation deeply appreciates your kind words of condolence and tribute on the sad demise of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit.

Mrs. Pandit was one of the most eminent figures in Indian political and diplomatic life. As you, Sir, have pointed out, her association with the United Nations went back to the origins of the world body. Besides her presidency of the

(Mr. Vajpayee, India)

General Assembly, she was closely associated with various other United Nations bodies, notably in the social field.

Mrs. Pandit was a committed internationalist, in her belief that when nations of the world got together to promote noble objectives success attended their efforts. Her role as the first woman President of the General Assembly was a reflection of her abiding faith in the United Nations.

I had the privilege and honour of working with Mrs. Pandit. She was a charming, courageous and able person.

As you have said, Mrs. Pandit fought for the freedom of our country. She was behind bars for many years, and she lost her husband when he was in prison. After the achievement of independence she devoted herself to its consolidation and to projecting India's views in the international field.

We mourn the passing of Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit. In its bereavement my country draws solace from the General Assembly's commemoration of her today. I should like, on behalf of the people of India, to thank you, Mr. President, and all delegations for the homage that has been paid to the departed soul.

READEX FICHE

AGENDA ITEM 23 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/45/35 and Corr.1)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/709)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/45/L.24 to A/45/L.28)

Mr. ABDUL GHAFFAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): For more than 40 years now those who seek peace in the Middle East have yearned for a glimmer of hope that a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict may be found. As a result of the ending of the cold war between East and West new hope has been born in the breasts of optimists, but Iraq's aggression against Kuwait has stifled that hope and sent alarming signals to the pessimists, who do not see on the horizon any sign of peace or stability in the Arab world.

In spite of all the complexities of the international system and its effect on the Palestinian struggle for freedom and justice, the Palestinian question, with all its complex elements and thorny dimensions cannot be probed or interpreted either optimistically or pessimistically.

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

Any thoughtful observer of the changing Palestinian-Israeli conflict will discover that the liberation thinking of the Palestinian and the ideology of the Zionist, like parallel lines, can never converge, since they are separated by a chasm of antitheses and contradictions which give no indication that Arab-Israeli crises and wars have led to a maturity that would lead to a perspective of peace conducive to an acceptable settlement.

For four decades, Palestinian political thinking in our time has gone through three basic phases:

First, the phase of advocating the liberation of the whole territory of Palestine to undo the injustice and displacement meted out to the Palestinian people in 1948. This phase covered the years from 1964 to 1968.

Secondly, the phase of the call to establish a secular, democratic State. This lasted from 1969 to 1973.

Thirdly, the phase of accepting the concept of a solution based on the establishment of two States, one Palestinian and one Israeli, which began in 1974.

These three phases have gone through long gestation periods, replete with suffering, oppression, killing, and the displacement of Palestinians, of human beings whose ardour for struggle has not been extinguished and whose visceral spirit of defiance lives on.

The last phase reached its culmination in the 19th session of the Palestinian National Council, held in Algeria from 12 to 15 November 1988, which endorsed Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and accepted the right of Israel to exist. The sympathizers and supporters of Israel have constantly demanded that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) should affirm three basic principles as a price for recognition of the Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. These principles are: first, recognition of the right of Israel to exist; second, acceptance of a peaceful

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

solution based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); and, third, renunciation of terrorism. The PLO's declaration of its acceptance of these principles has led to recognition of the independent Palestinian State by over 100 States.

In the wake of these developments, some thought that since Israel has had its basic demands met, the road to the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question should be open. Nevertheless, the developments in the Palestinian arena quickly exposed the falsity of Israel's claims that it is a peace-loving country. World public opinion has now been convinced that Israel totally refuses to recognize the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people or to recognize the PLO as a nationalist movement which is struggling to set up an independent Palestinian State. It has now become crystal clear that when Zionism accepted General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which partitioned Palestine into two States, one Arab and one Jewish, it did so only to pave the way for its admission to the United Nations, which did indeed confer legitimacy on the Jewish State.

Zionist thinking today shows a lack of consistency and harmony with political reality. It confronts the peaceful Palestinian orientation with either extreme intransigence or with tiny crumbs of attention characterized by some moderation; this shows up the undercurrents in Israeli society, both political and social, which have led to a philosophy of complete irrationality and the paralysis of Zionism's decision-making.

This indecisiveness in Israeli philosophy has manifested itself in two basic currents in Israeli society. The first of those two currents is politically and intellectually inspired by mythology and legends. It calls for the establishment of Greater Israel, in the words of Yitzak Shamir, the Prime Minister of Israel, from the sea to the river, that is, from the Mediterranean Sea to the river Jordan,

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

by expelling the Palestinians from the occupied territories and replacing them with Jewish settlers from the Soviet Union and other countries.

The second current reflects an awareness that the matter of the occupied Palestinian territories must be decided, because these are segments in Israeli society which have begun to realize that the fact that the Palestinian intifadah has continued unabated for three years, leaves no room for doubt that it will be difficult for Israel to maintain its occupation of Palestinian land and to continue using terror and repression, especially since the Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza now number three million, whereas the total number of Jews is three and a half million.

The moderate Israeli faction believes it is possible to achieve a peace based on the principle of two cultures coexisting side by side.
Professor Yehoshafat Harkabi of the Hebrew University believes that this can be achieved if a clear distinction is drawn between political reality and ideology. There is no doubt that the Palestinian National Council, which represents the different currents of thought within the Palestinian people, and the leadership of the PLO have succeeded in resolving this issue by finding some harmony and congruence between theory and practice.

Some Israeli thinkers and politicians look upon the intifadah in a manner which does not distinguish between ideology and political reality and seek to annihilate the Palestinian people in the West Bank by the most vicious means, such as massacres and collective expulsions. I quote Yaiz Tsaban, member of Mapam, who said the following on the floor of the Knesset, on 26 January 1989:

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

(spoke in English)

"I don't sleep well at night because of my worry that if we let things go on at this pace - political hardening and brutalization, repression, and escalation of the intifadah - it follows that we will find ourselves in more and more difficult situations, and we may very soon see developments which will end in mass killings, and it is necessary to say this from this platform. We have already seen things in the world, and if this happens, the splits among us will go right down to the root. Israeli society will be torn apart... "

(spoke in Arabic)

My other quotation is from an interview with Professor Amos Funkenstein, head of the philosophy department at Tel Aviv University, which was published in the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz on 9 December 1988. In that interview, Professor Funkenstein tried to compare the situation of the Palestinian people suffering under the yoke of Israeli occupation with the situation of the Jews in Germany between 1933 and 1940:

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

(spoke in English)

"Between 1933 and 1937, up to the Kristallnacht, the situation of Jews in Germany was in some respect better than that of the Arabs in the territories. In other respects, their condition was worse, but overall, the resemblance is remarkable. In the first place, both Jews in Germany and the Palestinians in the territories were 'subjects' denied citizenship. Still, the Jews of Germany had at that time more lawful options they could pursue than the inhabitants of the territories. A Jew there in 1936 did not feel totally outlawed. Only in 1938 did the Nazis break into their homes and stage pogroms on the scale resembling ours. Generally, it was harder than here to subvert the legal order in Germany. The Nazis had to contend with the legacy of the Weimar Republic, and it took several years to destroy it. It is true that Germany in the end exterminated the Jews. But this became an actual policy only in 1940, under the seemingly apocalyptic conditions of 'total war'. It is also true that the Jews of Germany never resisted and never started civil revolt. They were peaceful citizens, well-integrated into German society. Their 'problem' existed only in anti-Semitic minds ... It occurred to nobody that elderly Arabs ordered to remove the roadblocks from the streets are like the Jews of Vienna, whom the Nazis right after entering the city forced to sweep the snow ...

"[Israel] is a society that feels threatened and develops paranoias. Here the analogy with German society after Versailles is striking. The talk about 'the whole world [being] against us' or about 'being stabbed in the back' was customary there."

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

(spoke in Arabic)

We find the words of this professor, who describes himself as an ardent Zionist, to be an indication of the possibility that Israel may resort to massive expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland.

One can conclude from the foregoing that the reason why the Palestinian question has remained unresolved is not due to the lack of a mechanism or arrangements for a peaceful settlement, but to Zionism's rejection - Zionism, which is the ideology of the Jewish State - of peace and recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Mr. AL-NI'MAH (Qatar) (interpretation from Arabic): At the outset, Sir, I wish to congratulate you on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the present session of the General Assembly. We are overjoyed to see you, a representative of a country that has many bonds of proximity, heritage and history with the whole Arab nation, presiding over the General Assembly.

We also wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Chairperson of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mrs. Diallo, and to all the members of the Committee for their indefatigable efforts to present a report that reflects the actual facts. The Committee's report to the Assembly is lucid, thought-provoking and replete with worthy and courageous ideas. The Committee has performed its task in regard to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people through its investigations and the information it provides world wide. We wish to commend the Committee on its report, particularly since it has been transmitted to the General Assembly under such difficult circumstances as those now afflicting our Arab nation in general and the Palestinian cause in particular.

If I were asked to describe the atmosphere of this and the previous session of the General Assembly, I would call it a dormant volcano, after the upheavals and

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

turbulence it witnessed during the last decade as a result of the tension between the competing countries and blocs, the regional conflicts and the civil wars that distracted the attention of the whole world and wasted many of its resources.

However, the intensity of those conflicts is on the wane; tensions have eased and harmony has prevailed. Those who were adversaries yesterday, have come together now. They seek co-operation and pursue a policy of peace and security. We have witnessed this in many parts of the world, except the Middle East. Only the Middle East that has been deprived of the blessings of peace and tranquillity.

In addition to the question of Palestine, on whose shores all attempts at reaching a settlement have been dashed, we have been afflicted by an act of aggression against an Arab country by another Arab country. The invaders have thus been driven by instinct and intoxicated by their own perceptions. Instead of saving their efforts to rescue Palestine, they have invaded a small sisterly country. The result has been increased tension in our region and more complexity in problems which are complicated enough.

We have seen many problems in the past few years well on the way to being resolved; some after a few years of conflict and others after many years of conflict equal to that of the Palestinian problem. Regardless of the reasons that contributed to their resolution, there is no doubt that the climate of international détente and the improved international relations between the competing blocs and adversaries greatly contributed to their solution.

The hope was that the Palestinian question would be affected by this favourable climate and that it would forge ahead towards a comprehensive, peaceful and permanent settlement. However, this did not take place because of Israel's persistence in pursuing its policy of rejection, arrogance and intransigence, and

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

the use of sheer brute force in order to suppress the resistance of the Palestinian people, as embodied in its valiant intifadah against the humiliation and indignity of the continued occupation.

The Palestinian people has not rebelled only against the policy of brute force and destruction pursued by the occupation forces in its territory, but also in defence of its legitimate rights, as recognized by the international community in the resolutions of the General Assembly, such as the right to self-determination, the right of return, the right to end the occupation, the right to establish an independent Palestinian State, and the right to exercise all its inalienable rights.

The valiant and courageous intifadah of the Palestinian people, that has now entered its fourth year, whose flames are still burning bright, despite the heavy price paid by the hundreds of martyrs who have fallen and the tens of thousands who have been injured or detained. The intifadah continues despite brutal force, oppression, the demolition of houses, the displacement of citizens, the closure of universities and schools, the expulsion of scores of people from their own homes, in implementation of the policy of collective punishment pursued by the Israeli occupation authorities.

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

This valiant Palestinian intifadah has been met with complete support at the Arab level and complete sympathy at the international level, reflected in the increased recognition by the international community for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, and the redoubling of its efforts to resolve this question in a just and comprehensive way that would restore the usurped rights to its lawful owners, foremost of which is the right to self-determination, and to establish an independent State on the sacred soil of Palestine.

We should not ignore an important fact, namely, that the Palestinian people, which has made all these sacrifices and made the significant concessions reflected in the resolutions of the National Palestinian Council, did not make those sacrifices and concessions gratuitously. It made them for the sake of a peaceful settlement that could be achieved through the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, as well as all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestinian State on an equal footing.

However, all those initiatives have been met with obdurate rejection on the part of Israel. This rejection took the form of the proposal by the Government of Shamir to organize elections with a view to circumventing the resolutions of the United Nations and hoodwinking international public opinion. The evidence is that this proposal was nothing more than a prevarication and a dilatory tactic to implement the design of expansion and annexation. What we see today is nothing but a realization of expansionist ambitions.

Israel has exploited the diversion of the world's attention to the Gulf crisis to bring in tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants for settlement in the occupied territories where it goes on building new settlements, regardless of its promises not to do so.

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

These serious developments take place on the heels of each other in our region in various forms that arouse concern. The dialogue that started between the Palestinians and the United States of America was halted a few months ago under the pretext of an operation that was allegedly carried out by a Palestinian group on the Israeli coast, and was condemned by the PLO. The peace process which was supposed to continue to move, albeit rather slowly, towards a new phase, has been frozen. No one knows when the momentum of that peace process will be resumed.

This is the kind of silent diplomacy which they have often advocated and which has led to nothing but paralysis and sterility.

His Royal Highness the Emir and head of State of Qatar in his statement to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 29 November, referred to the persistence of Israel in riding roughshod over the will of the international community:

> "Israel has rejected the implementation of the resolution unanimously adopted by the Security Council after the pogrom of Al Quds, to the effect of sending a fact-finding mission from the United Nations and considering providing protection to the Palestinians. This is ample evidence, and an additional one, as to the arrogance and the persistence of Israel to achieve the Judaization of the sacred city in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions adopted by both the Security Council and the General Assembly, that prohibit any geographical or demographic change in the occupied territories, including Al Quds al-Shareef. It is self-evident also that because of the special status of Al Quds in the heart of all Muslims in the world, its status should be strictly defined in accordance with these international resolutions. This is one of the main bases for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict."

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

The events of the past few years did not lead to any viable solution to the Palestinian problem. The silent diplomacy continues merrily on its path of silence and the blessed intifadah enters its fourth year, while the Israeli authorities go on repressing the intifadah and the Palestinian people, undeterred.

The events of 8 October were but a telling proof that Israel's stance aims at obstructing any reasonable solution that may lead to progress towards negotiation and an acceptable settlement.

Are we to conclude, after all this, that the international community has exhausted all the means at its disposal? In the meantime we share the pessimistic view of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People that the present deadlock is bound to exacerbate the situation and encourage acts of violence and extremism. We also share the Committee's conclusion that the Assembly, vis-à-vis the current paralysis of the peace process today, should consider the necessary measures to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East, and should renew the mandate of the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts with the parties concerned, in consultation with the Security Council, in order to facilitate the convening of the said conference.

The permanent members of the Security Council, provided they have the political will, can work within the framework of the Council to address the important issues relating to the establishment of international peace and security. They can, on this basis, deal with the significant issues concerning the Palestinian question in a speedy manner with a view to reaching a permanent and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

My delegation salutes from this rostrum, the struggle of the Palestinian people and its valiant intifadah. We are confident that this people will continue to resist the occupation and will continue to reject the humiliation resulting from

(Mr. Al-Ni'Mah, Qatar)

the practices of the occupation authorities. Israel has to realize that the time has come to change its policy, heed the realities of the situation and respond to the will of the international community, as embodied in the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council on the rights of the Palestinian people.

The march of the Palestinian people continues. Daily, that courageous people makes sacrifices and the blood of its children appeals to this august international forum to be the arbiter, to put an end to Israel's arrogance and to compel Israel to comply with the decisions of the international community, with the will to uphold right and justice, so that the rights of the Palestinian people may be recovered, to return to its homeland and build its independent State on the sacred soil of Palestine.

Mr. BENDJAMA (Algeria) (interpretation from French): Never since the end of the Second World War have the peoples of the world placed so much hope on the premises of what is being called a new order, one based on disarmament, on the relaxation of tensions and, above all, on the restoration of the rule of law, respect for human dignity and the restoration of freedom everywhere.

In fact, certain hopes for the indivisibility of peace and law were warranted. The presence among us at this session of the representatives of the independent Namibian people is the most eloquent example. As in the case of Namibia, other peoples hope to be able to know peace and finally to be able to exercise the basic rights of freely choosing their own future; that is a basic choice which has so obstinately been denied to the Palestinian people for 40 years.

From this standpoint the steadfast reaction of the international community to the recent events in the Gulf could in itself become a source of encouragement for these peoples, provided that this same reaction ensues where it should have occurred long ago - that is to say, in Palestine, where the subjugation of an entire nation has been and remains so abhorrent.

For once - and, we hope, for all time - the international community has shown a unanimous resolve to make the rule of law and the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter prevail. It will no longer be able to apply the principles of international law according to changes of interest or circumstance without undermining the credibility of its current action.

For the first time the Palestinian people can expect that the custom of faits accomplis - of which it has been the victim - will become an unacceptable postulate for the international community. The international community will no longer indefinitely postpone the urgent action it deems necessary, nor the implementation of the means it has decreed as imperative for situations that are, after all, comparable.

(Mr. Bendjama, Algeria)

For more than four decades the question of Palestine has been seen in its different aspects as a constant challenge to the international community. To the tragedy of the original spoliation has been added the sufferings of occupation, with its inevitable corollary of relentless deprivation.

The lands, the possessions, the freedoms and even the very lives of Palestinians are the targets of this policy of dispossession, in order the better to indicate the absolute denial of the existence of the Palestinian people, of its human rights and, of course, its right to its own homeland. Of course, the Palestinian people have risen up against this policy and continue to oppose it admirably. Whatever it costs them in suffering and sacrifices - and whatever it will no doubt cost them in the future - the Palestinian people have never faltered in their resistance to this dispossession. This resistance, which is heroic because of its courage and tenacious because of its constancy, is one of its most striking victories, for in this very forum, where the initial usurpation was endorsed, it is now almost unanimously recognized that the question of Palestine is exclusively one of satisfying the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. And it is doubtless the establishment of the Palestinian State on its own land that combines all the elements of the question, and that is what we must reaffirm once again.

In Palestine there is an Arab people which each day gives proof of its devotion to its land by a constant struggle against the yoke of domination. This is a fact that has never been denied throughout its history and that continues today with the intifadah. That thousands of Palestinians, mostly children, should defy the bullets of the occupation forces and of the settlers, in a daily struggle for their right to freedom, is living proof of their love for their ancestral land, the undying legacy of successive generations of Palestinians.

(Mr. Bendjama, Algeria)

On the other hand, the reaction of the Israeli occupier to the intifadah the excessive means used, the inhuman practices and the constant exorbitant demands are the best proof of the irreversible goal of the fait accompli that the Israeli occupier seeks to attain.

These terrible pictures that daily come to us from the occupied territories not only arouse indignation and strong feelings; every one of them is an appeal to our conscience. Every Palestinian who is killed is yet another wound for us; every child brought down by Zionist bullets makes justice an orphan.

Given this situation, the lack of reaction in conformity with the principles of law enshrined in the Charter encourages more brutality and more terror against the Palestinian people. That is how the Israeli régime has always interpreted it.

The complete and remarkably relevant report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People clearly reflects the deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories and the continued escalation of repression against the Palestinian people. Every paragraph is an overwhelming indictment proving that there is not a single provision, not a single clause of the main international legal instruments that has not been trampled underfoot by the occupation authorities. The United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention, even Security Council resolutions which were adopted unanimously - every single one of them has been flagrantly and arrogantly violated. What is more, the occupation régime has not even bothered to hide or mask the violations.

But the international community has witnessed Israel's rejection of resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), which were recently adopted by the Security Council. Only a few days after publication of the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians in the occupied territories, in the aftermath of the

(Mr. Bendjama, Algeria)

horrible crime of Al-Haram Al-Shareef, the Prime Minister of the Israeli régime affirmed, on 19 November, that he was

"committed to preserving 'Eretz Israel' from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan" - I repeat "from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan" - "for the benefit of future generations and massive immigration".

That is what the voices of authority of the Zionist régime affirm without any sense of decency. Hence the international community is once again summoned to react, for disapproval alone has never been and will never be enough.

The denial of the existence of the Palestinian people is demonstrated not only by the systematic violations of its fundamental rights and by the pillage of its economic resources and its property and by excessive demands; there is now the increasing scales of changes in the Arab identity and the demographic character of Palestine. To expulsion, banishment and the dynamiting of homes - all current practices - there has been added, for one year now, a massive immigration of Jews coming mainly from the Soviet Union.

(Mr. Bendjama, Algeria)

What is called the "Great Aliyah" is presented to us as an epic movement, but we are not told that it takes place at the expense of a people whose right to exist is denied and whose ancestral land is colonized. And how can one disregard the inherent unfairness of references to the right to live in the country of one's choice when the very right of return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians - who are called refugees and displaced persons but who have in fact been chased from their land ever since 1948 - is described by some as "unrealistic"?

The Palestinian people, through its intifadah, has brought a new dimension to our debate and to the urgency of seeking a settlement to the question of Palestine, which is and will remain the core of the Middle East conflict. The intifadah has provided proof that the occupation, the status quo, will never be accepted and that the fact of a Palestinian nation will not go away.

All the attempts to achieve a settlement that have been made so far have failed precisely because they have not taken that essential aspect into account. The Palestine question cannot be solved without the participation of the main victim of the conflict - the Palestinian people and the only representative it has chosen: the Palestine Liberation Organization. A settlement of the Palestine question is inconceivable if the national aspirations of the Palestinian people are not met; this means recognizing its right to establish its own State on its own land and Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories.

The General Assembly was not mistaken when it massively affirmed its support for the principle of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people. It now only remains for the Security Council, which should take advantage of its regained unanimity, to embark resolutely on preparing for the convening of the Conference.

(Mr. Bendjama, Algeria)

This new debate on the question of Palestine constitutes in the present circumstances in the Middle East a new test for the international community, given the deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories and the absence of any real prospects of a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

The United Nations and first and foremost the Security Council can make a crucial contribution to the building of a peace that can only be indivisible. For our part, we venture to hope that they will do justice to the Palestinian people, who have endured such a painful wait for justice.

Mr. BURAVKIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): During the present session of the General Assembly several references have been made - and rightly - to the advent of a new era of international relations and to the positive changes that have occurred, with their encouraging prospects for a solution of the many problems now facing mankind. This relates in particular to a settlement of regional crises and conflicts by political means, and in our view unprecedented progress has been achieved in that sphere. Unfortunately, that is not true of the Arab-Israeli conflict, where the key problem is the need to implement the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and independence.

The problem of Palestine remains beyond the reach of these positive trends and beyond the framework of peaceful processes, as is proved by the report (A/45/35 and Corr.1) of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and other documents, and also by the statements of many representatives during the present debate.

(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

A statement by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) emphasizes that

> "What is not open to debate is the need to move forward in the Middle East peace process. The status quo is untenable for the peoples of the Middle East and the broader world community. The method of progress must be dialogue - it is the tested alternative to violence." (A/45/86, annex I, p. 12)

However, today the path to a comprehensive settlement of the Palestine question and of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole is being blocked by Israel's continued occupation of the Arab territories and its refusal to recognize the unconditional requirement of guaranteeing human rights and to ensure the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to self-determination and to establish their independent State.

The Israeli occupation authorities, in their attempts to crush the intifadah, continue to resort to harsh measures, including collective punishments. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed and thousands of innocent, peaceful inhabitants are suffering from gunshot wounds and have been subjected to beatings. We are particularly concerned that many old people, women and children are among the dead and wounded.

The gross violations of the rights of the Palestinians have evolved into a widespread system of measures aimed at undermining the very existence of the Arab Palestinian people as a cultural, economic and ethnic community. This is demonstrated by the confiscation of land and property, the establishment of Israeli settlements, the militarization of the occupied areas and the mass arrests.

(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

Tel Aviv's policy towards the Arab population in the occupied territories is in obvious contradiction to generally recognized norms of international law and above all to the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of August 12, 1949, to the United Nations Charter and to resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is not a mere coincidence that this year alone the Security Council has considered this issue at several meetings and has adopted, inter alia, resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990). But Israel is ignoring these resolutions too.

(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

Many statements here have already emphasized that a broad political base has been established for a comprehensive, lasting and just Middle East settlement. It consists in the readiness of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to enter into negotiations with Israel within the framework of an international conference, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the intention of the Palestinian people to coexist with Israel in conditions of peace and security and the PLO's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms. To that we should add the virtual consensus on the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

The time has come to break the political and diplomatic deadlock in settling the Middle East problem and resolving its key issue, the Palestinian problem. Here too, in our view, the Security Council must play a unique role, taking into account its experience, which demonstrates that, given the political will, it can achieve consensus on issues concerning the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council must show the same consistency in adopting effective, practical measures to solve the Palestinian problem as it has shown over Iraq's aggression against Kuwait.

We of course recall that the United Nations has made a significant contribution to the search for ways and means to solve the question of Palestine. As a result of its efforts many resolutions have been adopted laying down the legal, political and humanitarian basis for a Middle East settlement that takes into account the legitimate interests of the people of Palestine.

The delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic favours the immediate beginning of effective multilateral contacts to establish a peace process and the convening of an international conference to discuss a Middle East settlement providing for the total withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the

(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

territories they have occupied since 1967 and the exercise by the Arab people of Palestine of its inalienable right to enjoy self-determination and to establish its own independent State, as well as ensuring the rights of all States of the region to free development and existence. Of course, all the interested parties, including the PLO, must participate in such a conference.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic would like to note the considerable work carried out by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to express our gratitude to its Chairman, Ambassador Diallo.

Mr. MUMBENGEGWI (Zimbabwe): Two months ago, when my Head of State addressed the Assembly, Zimbabwe had the opportunity to offer you, Sir, its congratulations upon your election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. I cannot fail, however, in my maiden statement here to let you know of my delegation's total satisfaction with the efficient and effective manner in which you have guided our work. It is already certain that the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session will complete its agenda with great success.

I must state at the very outset that it is with a sense of profound frustration that Zimbabwe is participating in the present debate on the question of Palestine. The Secretary-General's report (A/45/709) and the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people (A/45/35 and Corr.1) once again bear distressing news.*

Efforts to break the impasse over the Middle East peace process since the forty-fourth session have yielded no positive results. There is not sufficient agreement either within the Security Council or among the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to allow for the convening of the International Peace

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* Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

Conference on the Middle East. We had earnestly hoped that the momentum generated by the consensus that had been emerging over the past few years in favour of the urgent convening of the Conference would culminate in effective action by the Security Council.

Resolution 44/42, which received overwhelming support at the forty-fourth session, laid down some important principles and referred to some guarantees which we believed could make it possible for all Security Council members and all the other parties concerned to agree to setting in motion the preparatory process for the International Peace Conference. The Secretary-General aptly observes that the wide support received by resolution 44/42 and resolution 43/176, which preceded it, constituted in essence a reaffirmation by the international community of the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We had also believed that the improvement of the international climate, as well as the progress achieved by our Organization in resolving some seemingly intractable regional conflicts, would open the way to breaking the impasse over the Middle East question, the core of which is the issue of Palestine.

Zimbabwe shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report over the present absence of any diplomatic process aimed at overcoming the obstacles to the Middle East peace process. The persisting impasse is bound to result in a deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories and an intensification of tensions, which might plunge the region into an armed confrontation. I wish therefore to repeat President Mugabe's appeal to the United States, in his address before the Assembly two months ago, to resume its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). We believe that such a dialogue is useful in clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions about the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, as well as in giving an impetus to the peace process.

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

My delegation is extremely disturbed to note that, while all the other members of the Security Council and all the other parties directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict have expressed their readiness to begin preparations for the convening of the Conference, the views of only one member of the Council, as well as the position of one key party to the conflict, continue to stand in the way. It has been argued that the Conference proposed in resolution 44/42 is not properly structured and that the time is not yet right to convene an international conference. The situation in occupied Palestine is grave and it requires immediate attention.

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

My delegation must express its disappointment over the Security Council's inability in recent weeks to address properly the issues relating to the situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories raised in the report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to Security Council resolution 672 (1990). The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which has consistently carried out sterling work in monitoring the developments in the occupied territories, has once again in its report (A/45/35 and Corr.1) made the very pertinent point that, pending progress towards a political settlement, all necessary measures need to be taken immediately to protect the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Any more delays in taking action in this direction can only result in mounting casualties and a deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinians.

Zimbabwe wishes to add its voice to those of the members of the Security Council who stressed to the Secretary-General that the Council should be seen to be just and fair to all and that time and consequence should not be allowed to affect the upholding of the rule of law. Israel has for too long flouted international law by rejecting the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and by announcing its intentions to annex occupied Palestine. Recently we listened once again to defiant statements from the Israeli leaders declaring that the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, were part of Israel. This Assembly must make its position clear. It must send a clear message to Israel by pronouncing that its credentials at the United Nations do not, by any stretch of the imagination, relate to the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. Israel has for too long defied the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly and of the Security Council, and Israel's positions and policies have been the major obstacle to the peace process in the Middle East. It is now time for the Security Council

(Mr. Mumbengegwi, Zimbabwe)

to take the necessary measures under the Charter to compel Israel to comply with the Council's decisions and resolutions and to respect international law. If any progress is to be realized in putting an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people and in moving towards ending Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Security Council must act on the Palestinian question with the same firmness and consistency with which it has acted in other cases.

May I in conclusion express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his determination to explore the possibilities for opening up the peace process in the Middle East and for his untiring efforts in the search for ways to protect the suffering Palestinian people in the occupied territories. We urge him to continue these efforts and his consultations aimed at securing the Security Council's agreement to establish a preparatory committee for the international peace conference on the Middle East.

Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda): Despite the relaxation of tension and the progress made towards peace in other areas of the world, it is regrettable that this has not been the case in respect of the Middle East region. As we deliberate today, the situation in the region is clearly very explosive. We seem to be on the brink of yet another war whose consequences for the region in particular and the international community as a whole are too ghastly to contemplate. Uganda believes that the events in the Gulf, explosive as they are, should not however obscure our vision of the larger picture in the region - and the larger picture necessarily includes the question of Palestine.

The Middle East crisis, the core of which is the question of Palestine, has for four decades been a major preoccupation of the international community. Forty-three years ago the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which called for the establishment of an Arab State, Palestine,

(Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire, Uganda)

and created the Jewish State of Israel in mandated Palestine. Last Thursday we marked the forty-third anniversary of that momentous resolution. That day, therefore, is a stark reminder of our collective responsibility to remedy an injustice and to restore to the Palestinian people their inalienable rights and attributes as a nation, and of how Israel has obstructed their realization.

I wish in this regard to express my appreciation to the Ambassador of Senegal and the other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their commendable work. Their report, document A/45/35 and Corr.1, has been helpful in refocusing the attention of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine, the resolution of which is the key to long-term stability and peace in the region. I am happy to observe that the Committee has worked tirelessly to provide protection to the Palestinians in the occupied territories and to promote a just and comprehensive settlement.

The dangerous situation in Palestine, well portrayed in the report, stems from the aggressive policies of Israel and especially the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. One can clearly observe from the report that the Israeli objective is to annex these territories in pursuit of the dream for a greater Israel.

Contrary to the injunctions of the Security Council and the resolutions of the General Assembly, Israel annexed Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and is clearly in the process of a de facto annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. To this end the Israeli Government has expropriated extensive Palestinian lands and used them to establish Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. The massive influx of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is deliberately being encouraged in order to resettle them in the occupied territories. This can only compound the problem. The policy of harassing the Palestinian people, both inside

(Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire, Uganda)

and outside the occupied lands, continues to be ruthlessly pursued. The periodic report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/45/306) gives a vivid picture of the agony of the Palestinians and the oppressive measures Israel has put in place.

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These measures are designed to change the demographic equation and to alter the status and character of the occupied territories. This is contrary to the 1949 Geneva Convention, which expressly prohibits annexation of occupied territories, deportation of inhabitants or the expropriation of their land. The occupying Power is also expressly prohibited from transferring its population to the occupied territories.

Needless to say, the occupation and the repressive measures are being heroically resisted by the Palestinian people. The Secretary-General in his report on the work of the Organization, observes that

> "The intifadah will soon enter its fourth year and, regrettably, the situation in the occupied territories remains bleak, with little hope of early progress." (A/45/1, p. 10)

The peace process remain blocked by Israel's refusal to respond positively to the bold initiatives of the Palestinian and other Arab leaders which could pave the way to a just solution. Even appeals by its close allies for it to show flexibility have not evinced a positive response from Israel. The posture adopted by Israel is clearly designed to derail any peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has over the years demonstrated great courage and statesmanship by taking the necessary hard decisions to advance resolution of the conflict. It will be recalled that for too long Israel justified its intransigence on the ground that the PLO and the Arab countries had not accepted Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Clearly the decision of the Palestine National Council at Algiers, which was elaborated on by Chairman Arafat in Geneva, accepting a negotiated settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) was momentous. These peace initiatives of the PLO received widespread international support and recognition as

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positive contributions. As a consequence the United States began a dialogue with the PLO. Regrettably, Israel has so far not seized the historic opportunity offered to advance the cause of peace but, instead, has chosen to block all initiatives aimed at a comprehensive, just and durable settlement.

The intifadah has entered its fourth year and, regrettably, the situation in the occupied territories continues to worsen. Rather than addressing the concerns of Palestinians which ignited the intifadah, Israel has intensified the iron-fist policy.

While the response of the Security Council to the Gulf crisis has been prompt and decisive, the question of Israel's occupation of Palestinian and other Arab lands has not been treated by the Council with the urgency and seriousness it deserves. Israel has continued to show contempt for the resolutions of the United Nations. It is now more urgent than ever before for the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to assert itself and adopt measures, including those taken under Chapter VII of the Charter, to force Israel to comply with the Council's injunctions. Further delay can only result in more frustration and despair; which will have disastrous effects on the problem as well as on the peace process itself.

Uganda supports the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which is called for in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C and in which Palestine and other parties concerned would participate on an equal footing. In our view, this provides the most viable framework for negotiating a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East problem. Such a settlement must include the following elements: first, the withdrawal of Israel from the

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occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories; secondly, the right of Palestinians to return to their homeland; and, thirdly, the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to self-determination in a homeland of their own - namely, Palestine.

In the General Assembly we have heard much about self-determination and genuine elections. We share the concerns over these matters. But our concern is not selective: the Palestinian people are equally entitled to exercise the right of self-determination and to have genuine elections in a State of their own.

In conclusion, I wish to express our support for and solidarity with the people of the State of Palestine in their just struggle for self-determination and the restoration of their inalienable rights.

Mr. ADNAN OTHMAN (Malaysia): The General Assembly is once again called upon to consider the question of Palestine, which for well over 43 years, since it adopted resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947, has been a major concern of the international community given the magnitude and gravity of the threat that the question continues to pose to international peace and security.

In taking part in the debate on this item, my delegation cannot but express its profound regret and dismay that, despite all the efforts exerted and resources deployed by this body for so many years, the question of Palestine remains a bedeviling priority among the issues on our agenda. We also deeply regret that with the end of the ideological conflict - and in spite of the start of a new era in international co-operation and understanding, when a number of other issues have been settled or are on the way to being settled - we seem to be far from solving the Palestinian question. Israel's continued intransigence has frustrated all efforts to achieve peace. We are reaching a point where the United Nations must address squarely the issue of Israel's repeated disregard for the many resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the subject.

(Mr. Adnan Othman, Malaysia)

The Secretary-General notes in his report that:

"Given the grave dangers in the region that are evident to all, I cannot reiterate too strongly the need to revive efforts aimed at ensuring a just and lasting settlement of the conflict that, for decades, has been a source of continuing instability and has brought suffering to Arabs and Israelis alike." (A/45/709, para. 7)

The struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole and authentic representative, should be seen in the context of its fundamental rights and freedom from aggression and oppression, the recognition of its inalienable rights and the opportunity to exercise those rights with a distinct identity and with its own wealth of historical, cultural and social legacies. The Palestine Liberation Organization has demonstrated that it has the wisdom and political courage to make hard decisions to advance the prospects for a resolution of the problem, but Israel has yet to reciprocate.

(Mr. Adnan Othman, Malaysia)

As a new, post-cold-war era is inaugurated in the world, with a new working attitude on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council in finding solutions to the issues of Namibia and Cambodia and upholding the rule of law in the current Gulf region conflict, my delegation renews its appeal that, in the same spirit, the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, discharge its responsibilities with diligence and firmness in addressing the Palestinian question. Israel cannot be allowed to continue as if it were above the law and as if there were unquestionable protection for Israel from within the Council.

Mr. James A. Baker III, United States Secretary of State, in his statement on 29 November 1990 before the Security Council, said

> "we now have the chance to build the world which was envisioned by the founders of ... the United Nations. We have the chance to make this Security Council and this United Nations true instruments for peace and for justice across the globe. We must not let the United Nations go the way of the League of Nations. We must fulfil our common vision of a peaceful and just post-cold-war world." (S/PV.2963, p. 6)

That vision is common to all Members of the United Nations, but the objective can be realized only if the Security Council can uphold the rule of law and devote its attention to the outstanding regional problems, the most prominent being the Palestinian problem, in an even-handed manner. It is precisely the inability of the Council to uphold equitably the principles of inter-State relations that has paralysed the United Nations and prevented it from addressing many international issues.

On the question of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the United Nations has a special responsibility in that in 1947 the United Nations divided up Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State, which is the State of Palestine. But Palestine as a nation has yet to be created and the

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United Nations bears a moral obligation to shoulder its responsibility again. The United Nations has been unable to do this because of problems in the Security Council, where Israel enjoys protection from one of the permanent members.

The situation in the Council remains difficult; thus the General Assembly has a duty to galvanize support on all fronts to ensure not only that the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remains in the forefront but that there is on track a serious peace effort involving the United Nations. This could be done by raising the questions of Israel's credentials, its failure to comply with United Nations resolutions and its abuse of human rights in the occupied territories in a manner that would make necessary Israel's accountability for its actions. The General Assembly also has every right to continue to put the necessary pressure on the Security Council to play the kind of role that has brought a peace framework for Cambodia and a resolve to reverse aggression and restore the legitimate Government of Kuwait. Indeed, the General Assembly should intensify this effort in the light of the changing international environment and the existing co-operation and unity of purpose developing in the Security Council.

Already there are many members of the Council, including a majority of the permanent members, which see the importance and urgency of finding a solution to the problem of Palestine, a powder keg in a volatile region of the world, which requires the urgent attention of the Council. The French President, Mr. Mitterrand in his recent statement before the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in various statements, including one in the Security Council meeting on 29 November, spoke about the need to address the Palestinian problem. At the Security Council meeting on 29 November 1990, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze said that the international community and the United Nations

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"should continue ... seeking a path towards a comprehensive settlement of the whole complex of Middle East problems that existed prior to 2 August. That is not rewarding anyone; it is just sound policy and common sense.

"The Soviet Union is prepared to develop further its contacts with all the parties concerned in seeking a settlement of the Middle East conflict. In this context we have been co-operating actively with Arab countries and the Palestinians. We are ready to engage in dialogue, in any form and at any level, with Israel. We find the approaches of European countries interesting. And of course consultations among the permanent members of the Security Council on issues related to a Middle East settlement have a very special role to play." (ibid., pp. 93, 94-95)

While this is an encouraging sign, there is concern that the split in Arab unity as a result of the current Gulf crisis may affect the Palestinian cause. Supporters of the Palestinian people should not allow this to happen. Speaking for Malaysia, however, we are confident of continuing unswerving support for the Palestinian people from all the Arab countries despite this unfortunate crisis, which we all hope and pray can be peacefully resolved soon.

While we continue to press for the early realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, there is need to devote our attention to the pressing problem of the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories. It is indeed unfortunate that, rejecting various peace efforts, Israel is increasing its repression and mistreatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories, and this is causing grave concern.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Adnan Othman, Malaysia)

During the past three years the world has witnessed outbursts of popular protest, commonly known as the intifidah, in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This outcry for justice by unarmed Palestinian civilians undoubtedly represents a direct and legitimate reaction to long years of oppressive Israeli occupation. The Israeli authorities are responding to the agony of the Palestinians with harsh repressive measures that include the use of excessive force, causing many injuries and deaths, collective punishment, the demolition of homes, and deportations.

At the same time, the process of Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and settler vigilantism, continues unabated. This is a cause of tension between the Palestinians and the Israeli authorities and new settlers. The growing uncontrolled influx of immigrants, in particular from the Soviet Union, averaging about 30,000 a month, is exacerbating the situation. The international community is vigorously opposed to the Israeli policy of establishing those settlements, which is in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The United Nations has also declared those actions null and void and will continue to demand that Israel dismantle those illegal settlements and withdraw from the occupied territory.

Malaysia has been working together with a number of non-aligned countries in the Security Council in the past several months to address the pressing problem of the safety and protection of Palestinians in occupied territories, but our efforts have been thwarted by a permanent member of the Council.

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As a result of the tragic incident on 8 October 1990, Malaysia and a number of other non-aligned countries have again tried to address the question of the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Malaysia, together with Colombia, Cuba and Yemen, sponsored Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990). We are continuing to work for an enhanced United Nations role in the occupied territories. We believe that that is the only way to address adequately the problem posed by repeated Israeli violations of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention and other aspects of human rights. Regrettably, our effort has been delayed by actions within the Council. This was referred to by the Foreign Minister of Malaysia in his statement to the Security Council on 29 November 1990.

We are determined, however, to pursue a course of action that we feel is the minimum that the Security Council can and should do as a small but practical step forward in addressing the long-standing problem of the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories. We believe that it should appoint a commissioner, or ombudsman, to be assisted by United Nations personnel in the area, to monitor and observe the situation in the occupied territories and report to the Council. Israel should also be required by the Council to comply strictly with the provisions of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention. In this connection, Israel must allow the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to carry on their activities without harassment or hindrance.

What Malaysia and three other non-aligned countries are attempting to do in the Council is limited to addressing the very pressing problem facing Palestinians in the occupied territories, and it can be only a temporary measure. The overall, long-term solution obviously lies in a comprehensive, just and durable

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settlement of the question of Palestine. If the United Nations, in particular, the Security Council, is serious about working towards a new world order in which law and the inalienable rights of people are supreme, the top priority on the agenda must surely be given to realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Israel cannot be allowed to continue to ignore resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is about time the United Nations insisted on Israeli compliance. The United Nations, having let down the Palestinian people for more than 40 years, should not fail them now.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) (interpretation from French): In accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has tried throughout the past year to follow the Palestinian question closely, to make recommendations and to mobilize the international community with regard to the need to do all in its power to put an end to the tragedy experienced by the Palestinian people. The report submitted to us in document A/45/35 covers in detail the work carried out by the Committee.

The deteriorating situation in the occupied territories continues to be a matter of concern to the international community. Last October, when speaking at this rostrum, the head of the delegation of Mali did not conceal his concern at the increase in violence and the lack of progress in the search for a negotiated solution to this issue. In fact, Israel's intransigence has led to a situation in which we move further every day from peace. On the other hand, over the past few years the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has stepped up its efforts at conciliation and demonstrated its good will.

Acceptance by the leaders of the PLO of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis for settlement of the issue, and the desire

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expressed on numerous occasions by the Palestinians to engage in direct dialogue with Israel, although received favourably by everyone else, have not yet met with a favourable response from the Israeli leaders.

This intransigence has been demonstrated also by Israel's continuing refusal, since 1947, to abide by the relevant decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. It is extraordinarily frustrating.

Given the inability of the international community to implement its own decisions, the Palestinian people has organized resistance in several forms as a means of recovering its legitimate rights. The latest form of resistance, the intifadah - that popular uprising of the Palestinians against foreign occupation - has been going on for more than three years now. It is thus filling the gap left by the powerlessness, or at least the indifference, of the international community in the face of arbitrariness. It appeals to our conscience to ensure that right prevails.

Since the outset of the intifadah more than 700 Palestinians have perished at the hands of the army of the occupying Power. The dead and injured at Al-Haram Al-Shareef on 8 October are the most recent casualties in the series of violent episodes that have become established practice in the occupied territories.

The Palestinian people demands the exercise of its right to self-determination and independence and to establish its national homeland in occupied Palestine. This right was reaffirmed by resolution 181 (II), of 29 November 1947, and the process for attaining that objective has been defined progressively by the United Nations.

Thus, in endorsing the Declaration on Palestine adopted in 1983 following the International Conference held in Geneva that year, the General Assembly reaffirmed: first, the need for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable right to self-determination and independence; secondly, the need for

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the Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; thirdly, the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; fourthly, the need to settle the problem of Palestinian refugees; and, fifthly, the principle of the convening, under United Nations auspices, of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties directly concerned, including the PLO.

I should like to recall in this connection that the General Assembly had already in 1974, affirmed that the Palestinian question is the crux of the Middle East conflict.

By resolution 44/42, of 6 December 1989, the General Assembly reaffirmed its dedication to the principles just listed.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of which my country is a member, is working tirelessly to achieve the objectives set out in resolution 44/42. In this it has had the technical support of the Division for Palestinian Rights and of non-governmental organizations in solidarity with the Palestinian people in its cause. We welcome such co-operation.

My delegation believes that the machinery provided by United Nations resolutions, if those resolutions are implemented, can contribute to the attainment of a negotiated, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question. However, the negative attitude of the Israeli authorities is blocking this process. They are acting in complete contradiction of those resolutions. Whereas the resolutions demand their withdrawal from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, Israel has adopted a settlement policy in those territories, thus encouraging thousands of Soviet Jews to emigrate there.

It has unilaterally proclaimed Jerusalem its capital, in violation of resolution 181 (II), which gives the Holy City international status.

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

Every day it uses violence against populations that, as an occupying Power, it has an international obligation under the Fourth Geneva Convention to protect. In the occupied territories Palestinians are arrested and arbitrarily deported, towns are besieged and houses are demolished. These outrages occur every day. It is my delegation's view that urgent measures must be taken to ensure the security of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

In addition to specific missions to the region, such as those provided for by Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), it would be useful to set up a United Nations monitoring structure to guarantee the safety of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

It has been said, and we would also say, that the world is in the throes of change. The split into Western and Eastern camps and the cold war are over, and many peoples are beginning to benefit from the effects of this new climate in international relations. We are now seeing a kind of convergence of the systems. Why, then, should the Palestinian people be excluded from the benefits of this détente? The Security Council, which in the past was paralysed by vetoes, is now shouldering its responsibility for the maintenance of peace, as is shown by the initiatives it has taken over the past four months on the Gulf crisis.

Even if resolution 678 (1990) of 29 November concerns Iraq, it is nevertheless a serious warning to all those who had believed up to the last minute that aggression and occupation could go unpunished. Israel must draw its own lessons from this, and recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence and the right to establish their national homeland in Palestine. This can be achieved without violence, through a constructive dialogue between the leaders of Israel and those in charge of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

History shows us clearly that no people can remain in a perpetual state of war without putting its own existence in jeopardy. We therefore think that negotiations on the Middle East which would take the interests of all the parties into consideration are the only way to establish a climate of mutual confidence between the peoples of the region, thus leading to a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

My delegation extends an invitation to Israel to take that path.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): First of all, I should like to welcome Comrade Farouk Kaddoumi and the delegation of Palestine, who have finally been able to overcome the obstacles which once again the arbitrariness and discrimination of others tried to raise in order to prevent that delegation from attending this debate. Moreover, through Comrade Kaddoumi, we greet the valiant and worthy people of Palestine who for three years have been waging a heroic struggle to achieve full restoration of their inalienable national rights.

Once again the General Assembly is reviewing the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. During the several years in which that Committee has been working, it has been trying to move forward to a just solution to the problem of Palestine. Decades have now passed and the Assembly, year after year, is still examining this same problem. It is doing so now, moreover, in the context of what some have called the beginning of a new international order, a new situation in the world which they seek to present as being favourable to the cause of the principles of law, peace and co-operation between States.

However, we are also examining this item at a time when the problem, far from moving ahead to a solution, is obviously become more and more complex; at a time when, throughout this year, our attention has been drawn to several adverse

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

phenomena, such as the immigration of new contingents of settlers and their illegal settlement in the occupied territories; and the recrudescence of measures against the Palestinian people, measures repressive enough to have caused the death of dozens of patriots and to have compelled the international community to examine them more than once.

The General Assembly once again has before it several draft resolutions of which my delegation is a sponsor. One can see, from any of the paragraphs of any of these draft resolutions, how difficult it is to imagine, when it comes to the question of Palestine, that what we have now is anything which could be called new or that this situation has benefited at all from any putative improvement in international relations.

Draft resolution A/45/L.24, for example, in its operative paragraph 2, reads as follows:

> "Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 93 to 102 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited". (A/45/L.24, para. 2)

For 14 years now the Committee and the General Assembly have been waiting for the Security Council to adopt measures that meet the criteria which the vast majority of the international community represented in this Hall have repeated from year to year.

I do wonder, really, whether this lack of diligence on the part of the Security Council, this insensitivity on the part of this principal organ of the United Nations, is proof of the existence of a new world order characterized by the forward march of the principles of law and justice. I also wonder whether we

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

really are in a position to hope with any degree of optimism that the Security Council will at last lend an ear to what the General Assembly, certainly by a large majority, will once again say to it in a few days' time.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

The experience of the year that is coming to an end would seem to suggest the opposite. The report of the Council on its work will be before the General Assembly in a few days, and in the quite considerable part of the report devoted to the question of Palestine, representatives will once again be able to confirm the exercise of the veto right, which is certainly not a thing of the past but rather a right that is exercised quite frequently at the present time when it comes to decisions that might affect Israel's occupation of Palestine and its illegal actions there. In the Council's report we shall see once again how the exercise of the right of veto by the United States delegation prevented the Council from taking a consistent decision in the middle of this year.

However, something that is not in this report and that it will be necessary to wait until next year for the Assembly to be apprised of, is what is happening now, and what was happening until a few days ago, in the Security Council.

The representative of Malaysia referred to the draft resolution which our two delegations, together with the delegations of Colombia and Yemen, submitted to the Security Council for consideration more than a month ago. Our resolution, as he so rightly explained, does not deal with the complete solution of the problem. Nor is it intended to solve the whole question of Palestine; rather it refers specifically to one problem in particular and puts forward a very measured proposal to try to provide greater protection for the civilian population of Palestine. It does so, moreover, on the basis of the report submitted by the Secretary-General following the events of October last when several Palestinians were killed by the Israeli security forces in Jerusalem. We had to devote the whole month of November to the matter - and it is well for this fact to be placed on record in the General Assembly - to try to achieve the very minimum. It was not even possible to have the Security Council appoint a Commissioner to go to Palestine, much less to have it adopt effective or appropriate measures, for which we have been calling for many

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

years. But we were at least hoping that it would be possible for that august body - as the Security Council is often called - to consider the draft resolution.

When it comes to Palestine, not only do we face a blatant lack of sensitivity on the part of the minority which keeps on trying to deny the right of that people, but also, to speak quite frankly, we have also to face the illegality and crass violation even of the rules which are supposed to govern the activities of that august body.

Now that November is past, now that we are already in the month of December, my delegation is sure that we will be able to exercise our right to have a draft resolution considered and that it will finally be remembered that the rules of procedure of the Security Council that allow that should be respected first and foremost by its President.

In the circumstances in which we are again considering this question, my delegation wishes to express its full support for the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. It reiterates its support for the recommendations contained in the draft resolutions which are before us for consideration, and again expresses our view that the General Assembly, which represents the vast majority of the international community, must carry out an in-depth study of the situation that exists in our Organization in regard to this problem and take decisions which will enable the so-called new order not to become one based on the old criteria of hegemony and the imposition of the will of a few Powers but rather a new democratic order which will serve the interests and legitimate aspirations of our peoples - from which, of course, we cannot exclude the heroic people of Palestine.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

We have before us not only the question of the inalienable national rights of that people, its right to independence and self-determination, but also the basic question of the principles relating to the authority, the prestige of the United Nations itself, because what is at stake, too, is ascertaining whether we will be able to ensure that the United Nations and its main organs will act in conformity with its Charter and in accordance with the criteria of the majority, or whether it will continue to be dominated by arbitrariness and the imposition of the will of a small group.

Mr. KHARRAZI (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I should like to pay a tribute to the many thousands of Palestinians who have been martyred in their struggle against the Zionists since the very beginning of the occupation of their homeland. The inception of the intifadah, whose martyrs deserve a special tribute has given greater significance to the history of the sacred Palestinian struggle.

The question of Palestine, which remains unresolved, is the most persistent in the Middle East. While the new international atmosphere has indeed provided a welcome opportunity for the settlement of many international and regional disputes, it has had no positive impact on the question of Palestine.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

This, in fact, indicates the inherent difference between the nature of this issue and that of other global and regional questions. A holy land that is the object of particular respect among the followers of the great religions of the world, especially Muslims, has been brought under occupation under the pretext of Judaism. In order to meet their insane ambitions, the occupiers have subjected the real inhabitants to the agonies of exile, homelessness, repression and torment. The Palestinians living in occupied Palestine suffer from the worst living conditions. According to the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East:

> "The Israeli authorities continued to apply harsh repressive measures, and violations of human rights were widespread. Between 1 July 1989 and 30 June 1990, 85 Palestinians were killed in Gaza and 164 in the West Bank. More than 20,000 sought emergency medical attention in local hospitals and the Agency's clinics, suffering from beatings, tear-gas inhalations and rubber bullets or live ammunition wounds; 24 children under 15 years of age were killed and some 1,640 were treated for beatings." (A/45/13, para. 8)

Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his report to the Security Council, affirmed the following:

> "Palestinians have expressed a profound feeling of vulnerability at all times, whether in the workplace, at school, in places of worship or simply walking down the street ... They have stated that they felt unsafe even inside their homes, which were frequently subjected to midnight searches, and during which entire households, including children, were beaten. It was said that arrests during such operations were common. A wide range of collective punishments had, they said, become routine during the past three years, such as curfews,

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

the demolition of homes, administrative detention and the uprooting of trees." (S/21919 and Corr.1, para. 19)

It is no surprise to anyone to hear of the brutal practices of the occupying régime of Al-Quds. A régime forged by aggression and occupation has no alternative but to perpetuate its illegitimate existence through further aggression and repressive practices, such as torture, murder, plunder, the demolition of houses, and altering the demographic and economic structures in the occupied territories. The illegal wide-scale immigration of Jews to Palestine has created the most alarming concern as regards the destiny of the oppressed people of Palestine. The transfer to and settlement of large groups of Jews in the occupied territories, followed by the expulsion of Palestinians, is being pursued by the Zionist régime to implement its expansionist policy. This policy is being implemented although the United Nations has repeatedly condemned this illegal practice aimed at the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories.

Indeed, one can hardly expect much respect for international law and its principles from an aggressor and occupier, since the act of occupation in itself contradicts the basics of international law and principles. Last month, in the wake of the savage suppression of unarmed and defenceless Palestinians by the Zionist régime, the Security Council condemned this régime unanimously and called for the dispatch of a mission to the occupied territories to investigate the situation. To conceal the gravity of its crimes the Zionist régime refused to accept the mission. Such an attitude was not far from what was expected, and it is hardly necessary to point out in this context that the widespread support provided by certain countries since the very inception of the Zionist régime has enormously encouraged this régime in taking inhuman measures in violation of international law. The unjustifiable delay in consideration of the Secretary-General's report by

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

the Security Council because of pressure from the United States is only one example of this support. It is incumbent upon the Security Council to take the necessary measures under Chapter VII of the Charter vis-à-vis the Zionist régime.

The nature of the Zionist entity, however, is very well known to the Palestinians. Based on their long and very bitter experience, the Muslim people of Palestine have found it totally futile to offer olive branches to those that have occupied their land. The Palestinians have also realized that they cannot expect anybody to be more concerned about their situation than they are themselves.

It is against this background that the Palestinians march on through the third year of their intifadah, which is the outcome of 40 years of resistance and struggle of various kinds aimed at liberating Palestine. The continuation of the intifadah indicates that the Palestinian people are more than ever determined to regain their legitimate rights, above all their right to self-determination.

A common theme observed in many statements delivered during the current debate is the importance of not overlooking many serious international issues that may have become temporarily overshadowed by a new event. In the context of international relations every question has its own importance. Thus, nothing should absolve the international community from its duty regarding the sufferings and grievances of the Palestinians in occupied Palestine. Support for the righteous demands of the people of Palestine requires vigorous action against the Zionist régime. Zionism and racism should indeed be confronted on an equal footing, since they are both crimes of the same nature against humanity.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, aware of the aspirations of the Muslim people of Palestine, has ever since its establishment supported the Palestinians' legitimate struggle to regain their basic rights. From the Islamic standpoint, the question of Palestine and the fate of the Palestinians are extremely important. Therefore,

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

we deem it necessary, as a religious duty, to support the aspirations of Palestinians. In this connection a bill was recently approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly authorizing the relevant institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support, materially and morally and within the limits of their capability, the families of martyrs, the disabled, prisoners and missing persons in the occupied territories who devoted their life to the liberation of Palestine. In addition, an annual quota in the universities of Iran has been allocated to Palestinian applicants.

It is our firm conviction that the problem of Palestine, the root cause of instability in the Middle East, cannot be solved unless the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian State in the entire land of Palestine, are restored.

(Mr. Kharrazi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Muslim people throughout the world should now intensify their support for Palestinians, who have already proved that they would neither abandon their struggle nor compromize their principles and fundamental rights. We condemn the policies and practices of the Zionist régime and underline that, in the process of finding a solution to the Palestinian problem, any plan that will lead to the recognition of the illegitimate régime occupying Palestine will not be able to guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people and will not be acceptable to Muslims.

In conclusion, I should reiterate that the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to support the Muslim and combatant Palestinian people and spare no effort to promote their lofty goals.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3369 (XXX) of 10 October 1975, I now call on the Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Mr. ANSAY (Organization of the Islamic Conference): I should like to thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to address the General Assembly on an issue of such extreme importance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I am pleased, first of all, to underscore with appreciation the strenuous efforts made by the United Nations since its inception to solve regional and international problems so as to bring about international peace and security, as well as progress and prosperity, for various nations and peoples of the world.

The question of Palestine has been one of the issues that has received the undivided attention of the United Nations for almost half a century.

The Assembly today has before it the latest report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in which this lofty

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body is reminded and informed in no uncertain terms of the continuing ordeal of the Palestinians.

Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Committee for its dedicated service, under the able and dynamic leadership of Ambassador Diallo of Senegal. Equally, we wish to commend the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the Palestinian question under the auspices of the United Nations. Indeed, he deserves all the necessary support in his difficult task.

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, the Palestinian people have been subjected to violence and terrorism perpetrated brutally by the Israeli forces of occupation, as is evident from their acts of torture, detentions, the brutal oppression of innocent men, women and children, expulsion of people from their own homeland, the demolishing of the homes of Palestinians and destruction of their cultural institutions, desecration of the religious sanctity of holy places of worship and the establishment of illegal settlements in the occupied territories - all of which constitute daily practices perpetrated by Israel and to which the Palestinian people have valiantly and confidently resisted.

The recent massacre last October of defenceless, unarmed, innocent Palestinians in Al-Haram Al-Shareef in Holy Jerusalem, assembled at one of their holiest shrines, is another demonstration of the conduct of the occupying Power and the plight of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation.

During all these years the Palestinian people have fought continuously against occupation, injustice, oppression and bondage to achieve its inalienable rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its national soil. As the Palestinian popular

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intifadah - now in its fourth year - continues, the number of its martyrs has reached more than 1,000 souls. Every day more martyrs continue to fall. More than 10,000 have been wounded. What is taking place in occupied Palestine reflects a new and serious element in the struggle of the Palestinian people against oppression. This fact must be taken into consideration.

For the Organization of the Islamic Conference and for more than one billion Muslims all over the world, the liberation of Al-Quds Al-Shareef and the Palestinian land is a prime cause, because of its justness and because of the fact that Al-Quds Al-Shareef is the first Kiblah and the third holiest place for all Muslims.

As I have pronounced on numerous occasions from this rostrum, we believe that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East problem, and at the heart of the Palestinian question lies the problem of Al-Quds Al-Shareef - the continued aggravation of which constitute a grave threat not only to the stability of the region but also to the international peace and security of the world at large.

Israel, which was founded by virtue of a United Nations resolution, ignores, defies and refuses to comply with the United Nations resolutions and also refuses to deal with the United Nations. Israel's stubbornness and refusal to receive the representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose mission, under Security Council resolutions 672 (1970) and 673 (1990), is to investigate the heinous massacres which Israel perpetrated in the courtyard of the Al-Haram Al-Shareef, is further evidence of Israel's persistence in its aggressive policies.

To defy the peace process and to crush the intifadah and change the demographic character of the region, the Israeli authorities have settled and plan

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to continue to settle newly arriving immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory, in violation of the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations and the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibiting the occupying Power from deporting or transferring parts of its own civilian population into occupied territory. This plan and the massive exodus of Soviet Jews to occupy Palestine constitute yet another serious threat to security and stability in the region and aims to change further the demographic character of Palestine.

How can it be humanly possible not to be alarmed upon hearing the news from the international press as presented by international press agencies reporting a recent statement by Mr. Shamir, alleging that

"The pioneering leaders of the Likud have left a clear message for holding the land of Israel from the Sea to the River of Jordan to provide shelter for the Jewish people and new Jewish immigrants."

Furthermore, Mr. Shamir invited all Jewish emigrants to head for Israel to live there forever and promised to keep the West Bank reserved for future immigrant Jews.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, which considers the Palestinian question its central cause, would like to emphasize once more that the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East region requires, first of all, the provision of international protection to the Palestinian people in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention, the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as abandoning by Israel the ill-conceived dream of a Greater Israel and the placing of this territory under the interim supervision of the United Nations as a preliminary step towards enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights.

(Mr. Ansay, Organization of the Islamic Conference)

In the Organization of the Islamic Conference we firmly believe in the urgent need for the resumption of the direct dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the United States of America and, consequently, the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and all the parties to the conflict on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in its capacity as the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people, to achieve the total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories; to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national rights, including their right to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to establish their independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Shareef as its capital.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference, on behalf of its membership of 46 sovereign States, yearns for the day when the flag of Palestine will be unfurled over its own territory and will wave proudly here also, amidst those of the other Members of the United Nations. When that day comes, Israel may also be able to savour the sweet taste of recognition and cherish the blessings of peace.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V) of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer of the League of Arab States.

Mr. ISMAIL MOHAMED (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): The presence of my brother Farouk Kaddoumi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine and the Chairman of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization among us here is further proof that public opinion is capable of upholding justice, and that the question of Palestine has its own representatives and its recognized leaders.

Once again, after many sessions and, it appears, for a few more, this august Assembly addresses the question of Palestine. As usual, a resolution will be adopted, and that is all the Assembly can do. Some will find the resolution stronger than that of last year. Some will find that it falls short of the desired robustness. And some will find it weaker than previous resolutions. All this will be analysed and scrutinized by us and by many institutions, agencies and individuals. This ritual has become an annual routine. Yet none of this has changed or will change the injustice or diminish the danger of leaving the question of Palestine without a solution to this very moment.

Indeed, nothing has changed at all. It is still a fact that a whole people has been expelled from its land and replaced with others by force. It is still a fact that this is a crime against the laws of humanity and against international legality. It is still a fact that the persistence of this situation as is, or worse than it is, or cosmetically slightly better than it is, will not impose a fait accompli or make that fait accompli acceptable to the victims of injustice, as Israel seems to think.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

The facts of history have shown that no nation can be defeated forever or made to collapse and become extinct. This contradicts the logic of history. Also, there is no power that continues to rise and prevail indefinitely. Such a power will either implode or explode as it continues to swell up with its sense of grandeur and become blind to the reality which surrounds it.

To exist in the world is to coexist with others, to give and take. This applies to nations and entities, as much as it applies to individuals. To exist is to give and take and thus achieve a balance between interests and ensure a secure and dignified existence for all that is consistent with justice. Here we may ask: for how much longer can Israel ignore the realities of our times? The answer is: only for a time, but assuredly not forever. It is up to us to determine that length of time, to shorten it and prevent it from taking us by surprise. Otherwise, we shall not be able to deal with the situation rationally, for reason would become befuddled with emotion and cause the situation to explode. Although the eruption may abate for a while, it may well be repeated.

We have two reports before us. The first is the report of the Secretary-General in document A/45/709 of 12 November 1990. The other is the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in document A/45/35 of 9 November 1990. The most important element in the concise report of the Secretary-General is the emphasis on the convening of the international peace conference in accordance with resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, on the basis of which the Secretary-General addressed his letter of 28 August 1990 to the President of the Security Council in which he requested the transmission to him of the views of the Security Council on the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, in response to the General Assembly's request in paragraph 6 of the said resolution 44/42.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

The reply of the President of the Security Council on 22 October 1990 was to the effect that the conference should be convened as called for by resolution 44/42. He stated that all the members of the Council but one have declared their support for such a conference. The Secretary-General subsequently addressed letters to the States directly concerned with the conflict, requesting their views on the convening of the conference. All the parties responded positively, with the exception of Israel. The most important element contained in Israel's reply is that the Palestine Liberation Organization is:

"a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel". (A/45/709, p. 5)

That is strange and bizarre. Most of the States of the world and most of the world organizations fully recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and fully recognize the State of Palestine, but Israel tells us all that we are unaware of the fact that we are dealing, from its point of view, with a terrorist organization.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

Surely, the Israelis cannot forget, even if they pretend to suffer from amnesia, that there is in their political history, past and present, a heavily laden record of terrorism. Suffice to mention Shamir, their current Prime Minister.

We also note that the Israeli reply contains the claim that a number of principles in resolution 44/42 prejudge the possible outcome of peace negotiations. Fine! What about what Israel said in the same reply, that it wishes to end the state of war with the Arab States and that it desires

"a solution for the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district; peace with Jordan and a resolution of the problem of the residents of the refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district"? (A/45/709, p. 5)

Is it not very strange that Israel wants no pre-conditions, but it wants to establish a host of a faits accomplis by changing the very names of occupied territories which have names other than Judea and Samaria, and puts forward so-called peace solutions, to the problem of those whom it calls the Arabs of Judea and Samaria, that is, the Arabs in Israel under Israeli domination?

What peace solutions does Israel mean? Does it mean peace with a people that has a history of its own or peace with people without land?

In the wake of all this, we are asked to believe that Israel really wishes to contribute to a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/45/35 and Corr.1), details in figures and well-documented information, Israel's breaches of international law and the inhuman practices to which it subjects the Palestinian people. In addition, the report contains recommendations, declarations and the results of symposia and meetings held by a large number of non-governmental organizations in all five continents, all of which condemn Israel, ask for justice for the Palestinian people and call for the

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

enforcement of the right of return, the right to self-determination and the right to protection, as a people under occupation, in line with international conventions. So were all these persons and organizations wrong and were they biased in favour of the Arabs?

The Israeli Ambassador, who spoke here on 30 November, very cleverly gave us a guided tour in the course of which he told us how to find a certain landmark in the United Nations building. He explained to us the map of New York, the width and length of its streets, and then sadly recounted the history of the Jews in the scriptures. Then, he went on to give us many valuable tidbits on the region. Then he wanted us to help him verify the information he had brought along on armaments in the region, as if the General Assembly were a branch of the Israeli war machine. He said a lot and moved from sympathy to veiled threats and naked defiance, but he quoted not a word from a single General Assembly or Security Council resolution. He never mentioned Security Council resolution 242 (1967). He said nothing at all about the International Peace Conference. He said absolutely nothing about Security Council resolution 338 (1973). He said nothing about Security Council resolutions relating to the status of the city of Al-Quds, namely resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 378 (1975) or 495 (1980) relating to the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories or resolution 181 (II) relating to the establishment of two States in Palestine, one Arab and one Jewish. He just told us many stories. It behoved the Israeli Ambassador, instead of giving guided tours and lessons in religious lore to remember that he was addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations, and that the Assembly has its own positions, its resolutions and its Charter and that all the Assembly needed to hear from him was a clear-cut view and not a tour in the labyrinth where Israeli diplomats would love to keep us.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

I have a wish, and others may share it. It is to hear an official Israeli statement that would define what exactly the Ambassador of Israel means when he speaks of the "land of Israel". Where does it begin and where does it end? We would like to hear that spelled out clearly.

We would like to find out what exactly does Israel's Ambassador mean when he speaks of the "historic rights of the people of Israel". We have heard mention of "the land of Israel" and "the historic rights of the people of Israel" many many times from the Israelis. We would like to read or hear some official statement that defines the geograhic, political and historical meanings of those two statements.

The Ambassador of Israel ended by saying:

(spoke in English)

"One day we will celebrate the dawning of peace with all our neighbours. That will indeed be a day." (A/45/PV.50, p. 17)

(spoke in Arabic)

We say to him "Yes, we share this feeling, but when we read on the cover of your distributed statement that you were discussing 'the question of Palestine', that is what was written at the beginning of your statement, and not at the end." When this subject, the question of Palestine, is no longer an item on the General Assembly's agenda, because a humane, comprehensive and just peace has been reached, we shall celebrate peace. From our point of view, that celebration will take place when the Palestinian people establishes its own State on its own national soil in accordance with international legality. We shall celebrate when Israel withdraws

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

from all the Arab territories that it now occupies - the occupied Palestinian territory, the Syrian Arab Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon. We shall celebrate when Israel concedes the fact that the Palestinian people has representatives who express its will, and that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is its sole legitimate representative. We shall celebrate when Israel concedes that the Palestinian people, just like any other people in the world, has the right to self-determination. And we shall celebrate indeed when Israel accepts and implements the resolutions of international forums.

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

Only then will it be time to speak of celebrating peace. We would love to celebrate peace. But that celebration will take place only: when the question of Palestine is removed from the General Assembly agenda as a question that was comprehensively settled in consonance with justice and human rights; when the Palestinian people establishes its own State on its own soil in consonance with international legality; when Israel withdraws from all the Arab territories it occupies, specifically the occupied Palestinian territories, the Syrian Golan territory and parts of Lebanon; when Israel concedes that the Palestinian people have its own representative who expresses its will and that that representative is the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Ambassador of Israel must know that this is not a matter of wishes and hopes, but a matter of adopting a sound approach and taking steps that are commensurate with the will of the international community.

One of the things which has attracted my attention in the statement of the Ambassador of Israel to this Assembly was the business of the width of Israel. He deplored the fact that, territorially, Israel was very narrow and that its width only increased after the 1967 war. So what was the Ambassador of Israel trying to tell us? In my view, he was trying to tell us that the only way to widen the girth of Israel and increase its depth was war. Of course we are all supposed to sympathize with Israel and support the widening of its girth. But how? And in what direction? Is this not the very essence of the Israeli expansionist outlook which craves more and ever more: more length, more width and more expansion through war? If that Israeli doctrine was to become the norm, then many States of the world must review their width and length, and, whenever such width and length fall short of their ambitions, wage war to correct the measurements. And thus the map of the world will be in a state of flux. The map of the world will continue to

(Mr. Ismail Mohamed, League of Arab States)

be altered and redrawn from one day to the next under the weight of the military might of every State that is not content with its width and length. And yet Israel does not want to be described as an expansionist entity.

It is of vital importance that in discharging the responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations, the international community earnestly and assiduously should have the Security Council adopt the effective, necessary steps to ensure international protection for the unarmed Palestinian people. The League of Arab States attaches great importance to this matter in view of its extreme urgency and the very obvious need to ensure the safety of that people's children, women and elderly members, as a first stage, until real peace is achieved through the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory and the establishment of the independent Palestinian State on its soil.

In conclusion, I should like to quote words of peace, true peace, which were spoken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the end of his report on the item under consideration:

> "For my part, I continue to believe that a negotiating process will only be effective if it involves all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and aims at a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination." (A/45/709, para. 7)

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and resolution 43/177, of 15 December 1988, I call on the head of the Observer delegation of Palestine.

Mr. KADDOUMI (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): I take pleasure at the beginning of my statement to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that by virtue of your outstanding qualities and your high efficiency the work of this session will be successfully concluded. We, the Palestinian people, cherish the close relations with the friendly population of Malta. Such ties are based on cultural, historically firm and good-neighbourly relations which link Malta to the Arab world.

I also wish to take this opportunity to salute your predecessor, the President of the last session of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Garba, for his valuable efforts. It also gives me pleasure to extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his constant efforts in the service of the cause of international peace and security.

I should also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to its Chairperson, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, for her valuable efforts and tireless work to support the struggle of the Palestinian people and to discharge the tasks entrusted to her.

Once again the General Assembly of the United Nations discusses the question of Palestine as it has done for over 40 years, that is to say, since the founding of the United Nations. The only question that has remained unsolved on the agenda of the General Assembly after more than 40 years, is the question of Palestine that has resulted in the displacement of our people, the occupation of our land, the denial of our most fundamental political and human rights. The failure to find a solution to the question of Palestine has led also to several wars with a heavy toll that amounted to hundreds of thousands of casualties. It still constitutes the crux of the conflict in the Middle East region. Its persistence is a grave hotbed of tension, a matter that cannot be ignored or overlooked regardless of the attempts of some to do just that.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

A few days ago, we celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We thank all the countries that expressed their solidarity with the struggle of our people for the attainment of its inalienable rights. That occasion provided another opportunity for the international community to renew the declaration of its rejection of the Israeli occupation and Israeli practices that breach every rule of international law and trample every human right under foot.

However, our people asks for more than solidarity and words of support. It certainly asks for more than resolutions that remain unimplemented.

We are aware of the fact that the General Assembly meets at this session in a new international climate in the wake of the demise of an era of confrontation and cold war. Our hope is that this will mark the beginning of a new era in international relations and the emergence of a new international order wherein law and justice will prevail.

If we are indeed on the threshold of a new era and if our aim is to defend and uphold the principles of international law rather than pursue strategic considerations and the economic interests of some countries, it is high time that we began to work together for the achievement of equality and justice for all and for the implementation of all United Nations resolutions everywhere and in every case.

There is no doubt that the United Nations Organization is qualified to play the effective role for which it was created to perform in solving international problems, upholding the law and safeguarding the peace and security of the world. However, this requires, above all else, complete respect of international legality and not the selective observance of that legality whenever it is in the interest of some to do so.

We have witnessed in the past few days manoeuvres in the Security Council which are disturbing to anyone who hopes that the United Nations will perform its

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

desired role. The American Administration, through its presidency of the Security Council, unfortunately impeded consideration of the draft resolution relating to Palestine submitted by four of the non-aligned members of the Security Council, by various manoeuvres which made light of the rights of those countries and of all established rules and procedures.

In a few days the Palestinian intifadah will enter its fourth year. Our Palestinian people are still subjected to the most gruesome measures of repression and terrorism at the hands of the Israeli forces of occupation. Over those past three years, the Israeli soldiers have killed more than 1,200 Palestinians. Half of them were youths, women and children. Tens of thousands were injured. More than 90,000 were detained. At the same time, Israel continued to confiscate our land. It has seized more than 58 per cent of the land in Gaza and the West Bank. The Israelis have also demolished hundreds of houses and deported tens of thousands of our citizens. The schools and universities, the colleges of our occupied homeland have remained closed since that time. Israel continuously escalates its terroristic and repressive practices. It goes on perpetrating the crimes of killing, detention, expulsion, starving out the Palestinians, keeping them under seige and pursues a policy of collective punishment by blowing up houses, setting fire to crops and plantations, uprooting trees and imposing yet more taxes.

Not content with all this, Israel's occupation forces have perpetrated yet more bloody massacres, including the massacre at Al-Haram Al-Shareef where at least 21 martyrs fell victim while hundreds were wounded. The Security Council has condemned this heinous massacre.

In the wake of that massacre the Secretary-General proposed measures to provide urgent protection for our people inside the occupied territories. The proposed measures included the establishment of a permanent presence of the United

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

Nations and its personnel as well as the application of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention which Israel refuses to abide by.

I seize this opportunity to call upon the Assembly to urge the Security Council to adopt a resolution that provides for and ensures this protection to save our people from these inhumane practices.

We also hope that the Security Council will adopt the draft resolution now before it which has been postponed for weeks during the United States presidency of the Council so that the Council may affirm its credibility and reinforce the faith of our peoples and the peoples of the world in this international organization whose credibility has been shaken.

During the last two years, we made the Palestinian peace initiative which was welcomed by the international community as a whole. We had hoped that by so doing we were taking practical steps towards peace but, to our deep regret, the search for peace faltered because of the intransigence of Israel and its adamant position which rejects every international constructive effort aimed at easing the tension and creating a favourable climate for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the region.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

Unfortunately, despite the international unanimity in Geneva, embodied in Assembly resolution 43/167, which viewed the Palestinian peace initative as cause for real hope that a just solution be found to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israel persisted in its intransigent policies in defiance of international legality, the United Nations itself and the public and official unanimity of the international community.

It is truly regrettable that this Israeli policy should have received the material, military and political support of the United States of America. And yet, while we responded positively to the five points put forward by Mr. Baker, the United States Secretary of State, Israel rejected them out of hand.

Delegations here heard the statements made a few days ago by the terrorist Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel, wherein he reiterated that Israel has no intention of withdrawing from the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories because it needs those territories to realize its dream of a "greater Israel" and to accommodate the new immigrants, who have started to invade our country and settle in our land. Therefore, we earnestly hope that the Assembly will support the Arab move concerning Israel's credentials and express its political rejection of the Israeli policy of annexation and expansion.

Given this deteriorating situation, it is the right of our people and of the peoples of all Arab nations to view with scepticism the claims by the United States Administration, regarding its alleged concern over international legality and United Nations resolutions. It is the right of us all to view with scepticism the veracity of United States declared intentions in the Gulf region. The United States has mobilized fleets, aircraft and hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Can it be in defence of freedom and justice as it claims or is it because the United States has new colonial designs in the light of the new international situation?

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

On this occasion, I should like to refer to the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has been the target of an unjust campaign by a few for its courageous position concerning the Gulf crisis, whereas that position was more concerned with sparing the region and the whole world from the risks of an all-consuming, futile and devastating war, from whose consequences the world would suffer for years to come. We in the Arab League adopted on the very first day a clear position based on the need to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis - and I would point out that I chaired the first meeting of the Arab League - within the framework of its charter and principles.

We have worked seriously and with a sense of responsibility to avert a potential catastrophe by giving impetus to peace and seeking to create propitious conditions for initiating a constructive dialogue between the Arab parties that could lead to a peaceful solution within an international framework.

Later on a broad Arab and international consensus emerged on those initiatives and ideas which aim at protecting the rights and interests of all. Recent developments fortunately have shown that we took the right position when we advocated dialogue and not war as the only means for preventing any further deterioration of this dangerous crisis. Therefore, we view the United States position as announced by President Bush, namely, the opening of dialogue with Iraq, as a step in the right direction towards finding a solution. We hope that this will be the means by which all problems in the Middle East will be dealt with, because those problems are interrelated. So are their solutions.

Despite the growing deterioration and increased gravity of the situation as a result of Israeli policies and practices and the United States support of Israel which unfortunately led to the halting of United States-Palestinian talks, the PLO still adheres to the peace initiative which we announced two years ago as being the

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

embodiment of the will of our people to put an end to Israeli occupation and to affirm the desire of our people to establish a just peace in Palestine and in the Middle East region through the convening of an International Peace Conference based on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate and inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, and all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing. That was the agreement in the resolutions adopted by the United Nations and approved by the international community unanimously.

(Mr. Kaddoumi, Palestine)

The twentieth century is near its end and the question of the Palestinian people is still unresolved despite all our sacrifices and suffering. We know the great depth of the hostility of the powerful forces that oppose the aspirations of our people.

We live nowadays in a period of radical transformations which aim at building a new world. We all hope that that new world will be more just, more free, more democratic and more peaceful. Despite the optimism generated by the new international détente and the ending of the cold and hot wars between the two blocs of East and West, we, like all the other peoples of the third world hope that the wars that used to rage between East and West will not be replaced by wars between North and South.

At this watershed and with the approach of a new century, the world is called upon to spare no effort in ensuring that the new century will not inherit the problems and crises of the current century, first among which is the question of Palestine. I wonder whether the end of the century will bring with it also the end of the question of Palestine and whether the new century will bring with it an independent sovereign Palestine. That is the challenge, the big question that the international community has to answer. The struggle of the people of Palestine will not end until we have established our State, the independent nation-state of Palestine, God willing.

The PRESIDENT: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Action on draft resolutions A/45/L.24, L.25, L.26, L.27 and L.28 will be taken on Thursday, 6 December.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

(The President)

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. AL SALLAL (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): This morning, the Assembly heard the statement by the representative of the Iraqi régime on the question of Palestine. He began by asking how much longer Israel would continue to occupy the Arab territories. Like the bitter truth, the reply is simple. The reason for the persistence of the Israeli occupation of those territories is to be found in the existence of dictatorial and terroristic régimes such as the one in Iraq that are content to raise slogans about the question of Palestine while, by their actions, they impede the Arab struggle from reaching a solution to the Palestinian people's tragedy.

Let us take a look at what the Iraqi régime has done for the Palestinian cause - apart from raising slogans and making empty statements over the past twenty-two years. Did not the Iraqi régime close its eyes to the killing of thousands of Palestinians in Jordan some years ago, when the tens of thousands of its troops that were present did nothing to intervene despite the Palestinians' cries of despair? Is it not the Iraqi régime that is responsible for the physical elimination of the heads of Palestine Libration Organization (PLO) offices in Europe - Said Hamami, Ezzeldin Al Qalaq and many others? Did not the Iraqi régime establish the Arab liberation front that was the source of division in and a principal factor in the weakening of the PLO for several years? Is it not a fact that Abu Nidal, the well-known international terrorist who was condemned to death by the PLO itself, is to this day the main ally of the Iraqi régime? Perhaps the representative of the Iraqi régime can tell us where Abu Nidal is at this very

(Mr. Al Sallal, Kuwait)

moment. The head of the Iraqi régime himself, in the course of the recent ABC television interview, admitted that he was sheltering and protecting that terrorist and other criminals whom Saddam Hussein is using for the purposes of his terroristic, clandestine diplomacy.

Was Iraq's 1988 aggression against Iran, which squandered the resources of the Iranian and Iraqi peoples and took a toll of a million casualties, a struggle that Iraq engaged in for the sake of the Palestinian cause? What about the invasion and occupation of the State of Kuwait, the killing and expulsion of hundreds of thousands of its citizens and residents and the destruction of its institutions and economic infrastructure? Was all this a step forward, an attempt to help liberate Palestine?

This barbaric aggression has destroyed every real chance for a just settlement to the Palestinian question - those chances which had emerged since the beginning of the intifadah. It has also set at naught all the efforts deployed over the past few years to create Arab solidarity and a unified Arab position with regard to a comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question.

The suffering of the Palestinian people who resided in Kuwait - and there were hundreds of thousands of them - is a vivid example of the shameful role of Iraq in its actions against the Palestinian people. According to the PLO itself, the Iraqi aggression and invasion resulted in the loss of an important source of support for the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It has also resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of Palestinians who have lost their property and had to leave Kuwait because of ill treatment at the hands of Iraqi troops and decided to go to the West Bank and Gaza, preferring to live under Israeli occupation rather than under Iraqi occupation.

(Mr. Al Sallal, Kuwait)

These are only a few, simple examples of the contribution of the Iraqi régime to the question of Palestine. Kuwait's role, on the other hand, is well-known. Not only did Kuwait support the Palestinian cause but it also supported pan-Arab and international co-operation. Kuwait has been one of the major economic donors both in the Arab world and in the third world. Suffice to say that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lived in Kuwait and enjoyed free medical, social and education services on an equal footing with Kuwaiti citizens.

Perhaps we should wonder here why is it that the Palestinian people did not choose to live in Iraq under the régime of Saddam Hussein, which claims to defend them, and preferred to live in Kuwait, against which the representative of the Iraqi régime levelled totally arbitrary accusations and charges this morning. The Government of Kuwait does not need the testimony of a terrorist régime, but in order to illustrate the fact that the allegations of the representative of the Iraqi régime are completely devoid of any basis in reality, allow me to mention a declaration made a few months before the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

That declaration by the Iraqis said that their brother Gaber Al-Ahmad Al-Gaber Al-Sabah and the fraternal people of Kuwait had played a privileged and decisive role in their glorious struggle. Kuwait had conscientiously and with courage faced up to the aggressors and the greed and pressures which were designed to make Kuwait abandon its own identity and the demands of national safety and security. Kuwait had remained faithful to its own principles and its own policy, without which and without respect for which all Arabs would have found themselves in an equally deplorable situation. By way of gratitude for the honourable role of Kuwait, His Highness the Emir of the State of Kuwait received the highest possible civilian decoration from the Iraqis.

(Mr. Al Sallal, Kuwait)

That was a statement made a few months before the Iraqi aggression. We should wonder who is lying, the President of Iraq, his representatives or all of them? There is no doubt that all those present in this Hall know very well what the answer to this question is.

Mr. STEIN (United States of America): I do not wish to delay unduly the Assembly's consideration of this agenda item, but I cannot let the remarks of the representative of Iraq pass without comment.

The representative of Iraq has distorted the record of the Security Council and has distorted the role of the United States in the Council. The United States votes for or against resolutions, in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, based exclusively on the merits of the text. We vote for texts that we believe will advance the cause of peace in the Middle East, and we vote against those texts that do not advance peace. That will remain our goal and will remain the criterion against which we measure draft resolutions.

The United States continues to believe that United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) must form the basis of a just, equitable and lasting peace in the Middle East. No Government has a proven record of commitment to implementing those resolutions more convincing and more consistent than that of the United States. We are proud of our record, and we invite all those who are seriously interested in bringing peace to the region to join us in this effort.

Mr. MOHAMMED (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): It is rather ironic that the United States representative should again claim that he was acting in the Security Council in the interests of peace. What kind of peace does he mean? Is it the continued Zionist occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories for many years now? And who supported Israel during this decades-long occupation? Everybody in this Assembly knows that the United States delegation in the Security

(Mr. Mohammed, Iraq)

Council prevented the adoption of dozens and dozens of resolutions that would have condemned the Zionist entity and denounced its attacks against the neighbouring Arab countries.

In the latest resolutions adopted by the Council, the United States representative, Mr. Pickering, said - I speak from memory - that his voting in favour of the draft resolution did not mean that the United Nations or the Security Council should play a role in the peace process in the Middle East. He had voted in favour of that draft resolution, even after the United States and the United Kingdom delegations refused to accept the draft resolution that was submitted by the non-aligned countries to dispatch observers from the Security Council to investigate ways and means of protecting Palestinian civilians under occupation after the killing of 21 Palestinians by the bullets of the soldiers of the occupying army.

All of this makes it quite clear that the posture and role of the United States in the Security Council serve in the first instance the interests of the Zionist entity to which the United States extends every protection and support in every political and economic area. Hence, to claim that the United States seeks to establish peace would be no reflection of the truth. Everybody knows this, United Nations documents and Security Council resolutions are ample proof of this, and the statistics are there to prove it.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.